

**DRAFT Minutes of the Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 5th
March 2026 at 7.30pm in Winterslow Village Hall**

Present

Cllr Simon Brown (Chairman)

Cllr Jim Buckley

Cllr Nigel Walsh

In attendance: Catherine Purves (Clerk)

Also present: Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers

Public Session: No items raised

Wiltshire Councillor Rich Rogers gave his report:

- Wiltshire Council will increase its part of the Council Tax by 4.99%, comprising 2.99% for general funding, 2% for social care.
- National Government has confirmed funding for the next 3 financial years, so giving some certainty.
- A booking system will be introduced to all Household Recycling Centres from September.
- Highways will be borrowing £15m to help fund repairs, this will cost £75m over 30 years
- Parking charges will increase, and the charging hours extended. There is to be a consultation, but the finances have already been included in the budget.
- The Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme will be wound up, and devolved to parish councils in 2027/2028
- Parish Stewards will be concentrating just on Highways work, not the other tasks they have so far been able to undertake.
- Local Plan – following the Planning Inspector's response, Wiltshire Council is faced with rewriting its Plan, as currently it is vague about sites are located and the new housing numbers required. Another call for sites will be carried out.

COUNCIL BUSINESS

The meeting began at 7.40pm

14.26 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllr Beavan, who had a previous engagement.

15.26 To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members

- a. To receive any **Declarations of Interest** in respect of matters contained in this agenda
- b. To consider any **Dispensation Requests** received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered.

Resolved: to note there were no Declarations of Interest, and no Requests for Dispensation.

16.26 Minutes

Resolved: To approve and sign as a correct record without amendment the minutes of Firsdown Parish Council meeting held on 8th January 2028.

17.26 To consider any items raised in the public session (Note no decision can be made) No issues raised requiring further action.

18.26 To receive reports from:

- a. *The Chairman* – Cllr Brown advised the police had nothing to report concerning the parish. He will be attending the Planning Forum meeting at Trowbridge on 12th March. Pitton Shop construction is two weeks behind because of the rain, but the floor has been laid and the frame installed.
- b. *The Parish Clerk* – The Clerk advised she had attended the Society of Local Clerks Practitioners Conference in January and would be attending the Wiltshire Branch Training Day later in March. She had attended the Local Highways & Footways Improvement Group meeting in early February.
- c. *The Council's representative to the Southern Area Board* – Cllr Brown advised the next meeting is on Thursday 12th March at Morgan Vale & Woodfalls Village Hall.
- d. *Firsdown Conservation Group* – Cllr Walsh advised there was nothing to report.
- e. *Community Speedwatch* – Cllr Buckley advised there had little activity due to the cold weather, but the Group would begin monitoring again soon.
- f. *GDPR training* – councillors noted that a written report from Cllr Bevan. Who had attended the WALC course, had been circulated to all. The Clerk advised that she had signed up to the SLCC's eGDPR training, and that a Data Mapping exercise still needed to be done.

19.26 Finance

- a. **Resolved:** To note the bank balances as of 28th February 2026:
Current: 746.49 Deposit: £37,643.98
- b. **Resolved:** To approve the following internal bank transfers undertaken by the Clerk:
 - i. 9th January 2026 – £2500.00 from deposit to current
 - ii. 9th February 2026 - £1500.00 from deposit to current
- c. **Resolved:** To confirm retrospectively for payment a schedule of accounts for February 2026 in the sum of £1449.61
- d. **Resolved:** To confirm for payment a schedule of accounts for March 2026 in the sum of £1849.26, plus two additional invoices of £247.15 to Road Ware for four Chapter 8 barriers, and £46.20 to the SLCC for the Clerk's eGDPR course. Total £2142.61
- e. **Resolved:** To note the February 2025.2026 Budget Monitoring form, no questions were raised.
- f. **Resolved:** To note the February 2025 bank reconciliation
- g. **Resolved:** To defer this item of the consideration of the ear marked reserves to the May meeting.

20.26 New Issues raised for consideration and action as necessary

Benchmarking exercise of the Council and Clerk's role – after a short discussion, during which it was noted that this had not been done for many year, it was

Resolved: to obtain quotes for the May meeting to consider, to include also the Clerk's salary scale and hours as well. **Action:** The Clerk

21.26 Highway/Parish Steward/Footpath matters.

- a. *To note any new Highways issues* – none noted, other than the ongoing problem of potholes.
- b. *To note any new tasks for the Parish Steward* – none noted
- c. *To note any new footpath matters* – Cllr Brown advised he had cleared the footpath from 99 Firs Road to the field gate, and grateful thanks were expressed by members.
- d. *To note any updates from the recent LHFIFG meeting* – Cllr Brown advised that the proposed scheme for Dunstable crossroads had been approved.
- e. *To note any other updates* – none noted.

22.26 Planning

- a. *To consider a response to planning applications received:* None
- b. *To consider a response to applications notified between the publication date of the*

agenda and the date of the meeting, if necessary:

PI/2026/01284 – variation of Condition 2 of approved application PL/2025/08317 at 96 Firs Road. After a short discussion, during which councillors noted that the visual appearance of the suggested pitched roof was an improvement to the originally suggested flat roof, it was

Resolved: No objection

c. To confirm the response determined by email for applications received since the last meeting:

PI/2025/09964 Proposed change of use from agricultural to B2 general industrial use at Manor Fram, Pitton Road, West Winterslow. Noting that this location is in Winterslow parish, given that there is to be no change to visual appearance, and that the change of use is not expected to generate any meaningful increase of traffic on the Pitton Rd – which already carries farm and HGV traffic – **Resolved:** to confirm no objection

d. To note planning decisions made by Wiltshire Council since the last meeting:

i. PL/2021/07895 – Outline application (all matters reserved except for access, layout & landscaping) for the erection of 9 dwellings and the provision of public open space on land behind 6 Firs Road, Firsdawn. Approved 6th February 2026

ii. PL/2025/09858 – demolish garage, replace with single storey extension and new open oak entrance porch at 78 Firs Road, Firsdawn. Approved 11th February 2026

Resolved: to note

23.26 To review and note other ongoing matters or decide on further action. As appropriate

a. Possibility of the FPC buying the woodland at the northwestern end of Firs Road from the Christie-Miller Estate – the Clerk noted that there had still been no response. After a short discussion, during which it was noted that councillors were unwilling to take on the responsibility of the public open space at 6 Firs Road should it ever be offered, it was **Resolved:** not to pursue this matter further. Item closed.

b. Purchase of replacement bench – the second bench, which would be the memorial bench, would be bought in May. The first replacement bench has been received; it is yet to be installed.

c. Hedge/trees on the byway – these should have been cut in February, but it was too wet to do so safely. If there is no chance of the work being carried out before April, the work should be left until the autumn.

d. GDPR/Data Protection policies – Cllr Brown presented the proposed policies to members, which had been circulated to all. After a short discussion, with no suggested amendments it was **Resolved:** to adopt these two policies.

24.26 Items for the next agenda

- Earmarked reserves
- Cyber insurance policy

25.26 To note the date and time of the next meetings:

Annual Parish Meeting: Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.30pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

Annual Parish Council Meeting: Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.45pm in the Meeting Room of Winterslow Village Hall

26.26 To close the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.48pm